Chief Executives Board for Coordination

20 June 2017

Original: English

First regular session of 2017
Geneva and Montreux, Switzerland, 26-27 April 2017

Summary of deliberations

I. Introduction

1. The first regular session of 2017 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), chaired by the Secretary-General, was held at the headquarters of the World Intellectual Property Organization, in Geneva and in Montreux, Switzerland, on 26 and 27 April 2017, respectively.

2. Held in retreat format, the session consisted of three segments on the following topics: the state of the world; the future of multilateralism; and the reform of the United Nations development system. During a working lunch on 26 April, the Board heard a briefing on the draft system-wide strategy on gender parity.

3. The present summary highlights the main points raised in each segment.

II. Segment 1 — State of the world

4. The Secretary-General opened the segment on the state of the world with an analysis of the present political and socioeconomic environment. Citing geopolitical trends such as the realignment in power relations among States, increasing fragility, a fundamental change in the nature of conflict and the global terrorist threat, he underscored the multitude of challenges impeding preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. Illustrating his views with examples of current crises, the Secretary-General expressed concern that, owing to conflict's evolving dynamics and its extraordinary complexity, some of the United Nations' founding doctrines had become blurred and its traditional instruments were, in some cases, less effective. These realities pointed to a need for United Nations peace operations to be able to better adapt to diverse situations and more effectively partner with a wider range of stakeholders in fragile environments.

5. At the same time, other global trends, including population growth, climate change, the movement of populations, rapid urbanization and water and food insecurity, were contributing to instability and compounding the already-complex political dimensions. The Secretary-General observed that, while globalization has had enormously positive economic impacts, including an overall reduction of absolute poverty, the inequalities generated by those same global economic forces

Please recycle

had contributed dramatically to the challenges that the international community was facing. In these uncertain times, the Secretary-General stressed that the United Nations system would maximize its value by being truly united and committing to reform to increase its effectiveness.

6. Speaking to the global economic environment, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund and the Chief Executive Officer of the World Bank reported that both institutions were forecasting a recovery in growth, back to pre-crisis average levels. The growth was projected to be broad-based and underpinned by developed economies, with emerging and developing markets providing some 70 to 80 per cent of the growth going forward. Uneven growth in Africa remained a particular concern, as did the continuing decline in productivity. Both institutions stressed the need to pursue sustained and more equitable and inclusive growth.

7. The Board's ensuing deliberations on the state of the world touched on a wide range of trends — many of them interlinked — that made for a particularly challenging environment for the United Nations system. These included the realignment in the relative political power of States; the declining power of the central State vis-à-vis other actors; the erosion of trust in public institutions and governance; the diffusion of economic power and trade relationships; life-altering advances in technology, information and science; social and demographic shifts, in particular aging, migration, urbanization and the empowerment of women; climate change, environmental pressures, energy and water scarcity; changing patterns of poverty, inequalities, fragility and violence; and the globalization-induced convergence or clash of ideals and identities. Board members agreed that the most effective way to cope with the complexity was to respond to the big trends as a system — collaboratively and coherently.

8. In its response, the Board noted with concern an increase in populist and protectionist sentiment that had contributed to growing intolerance and a deterioration of social cohesiveness and a diminishing respect for universal norms and the rules-based international system. Contributing to this was an increase in the perceived lack of legitimacy of the universality of the rule of law and democracy as the organizing principle. It was stressed that profound inequality, and the great sense of indignation that it had generated, was one of the main drivers of the megatrends currently confronting the international community and needed to be addressed as a matter of priority. In this context, it was observed that the formal equality among States, as manifested in multilateral organizations, needed to more consistently result in substantive equality among peoples. A strengthened multicultural approach was also seen as necessary to counteract exclusion and help to bridge divides.

9. Addressing the labour market challenges of today and preparing for the world of work of tomorrow were identified as critical to achieving sustainable development and sustaining peace. Board members also felt it was important to ensure that technology, especially information and communication technologies, and the digital economy benefitted all. There was more work to be done to deliver digital inclusion in partnership with private enterprise. Infrastructure was also seen as key to sustainable development; the potential benefits of investing in air transport in Africa, including job creation, the promotion of tourism and trade facilitation, were highlighted. The rise of new forms of crime and conflict, in the shape of targeted cyberattacks perpetrated by a new, unknown set of actors, was seen to pose a threat against which the international community needed to better prepare itself.

10. A robust outreach strategy to engage and channel women and youth as agents of positive change was seen as crucial to boosting United Nations efforts to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The importance of youth in

influencing the future outlook for people and the planet was particularly emphasized. In this context, the United Nations system's potential to create new horizons for young people through coordinated contributions towards their health, education, employment prospects and political and civil empowerment was emphasized.

11. Board members welcomed the positive trends in the world economy. As another counterpoint to their otherwise sobering observations on global challenges, the Board also recalled the significant achievements of the past 70 years, not least of which were significant gains in life expectancy, millions lifted out of extreme poverty, enjoyment of a relatively peaceful period of history and accelerating efforts to protect the Earth's environment. Such advances should be recognized both in their own right and also as forming a strong basis for continued progress.

12. Board members underscored their commitment to reform and to closer collaboration, in particular to strengthening the United Nations system's contribution to resilience and prevention in the context of the overarching 2030 Agenda.

III. Segment 2 — Future of multilateralism

13. In a discussion facilitated by three renowned experts, who illustrated the current state of affairs in the world, the Board focused on the threats and opportunities facing multilateralism. In a complex world that is increasingly multipolar and simultaneously facing a number of shared challenges, such as climate change and migration, Board members recognized that multilateralism — and the global institutions that support and facilitate it — were needed more than ever.

14. Yet, in its response, the Board acknowledged that multilateralism was at an important crossroads, where public trust and confidence in it seemed to be on the decline. The three main grounds on which multilateralism was being questioned were that it did not respect national sovereignty, it was perceived to be ineffective, and what was "international" or "globalized" was seen to work only for the elites.

15. Challenges facing the world today were ever more complex, emanating not only from traditional geopolitical risks but also from emerging vox populi risks. The multipolarity of standard-setting also meant that traditional multilateral institutions were no longer considered to be the only legitimate actors in this space. To be able to effectively respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century, new approaches to multilateralism were urgently needed.

16. Despite these challenges, the Board felt optimistic about the future of multilateralism, affirming that what the United Nations system stood for and delivered still mattered, especially on the ground. While the United Nations' mandates remained valid, the methods through which it delivered on them needed to adapt to the nature of the challenges of today and the future.

17. While recognizing that it might require concerted efforts and innovative solutions over a longer time horizon to address identifiable challenges comprehensively, Board members felt it important for the United Nations system to take immediate action, where it could, to reform and reinvent itself in line with the demands of the current reality. In this regard, they unanimously expressed strong support for the reform initiatives launched by the Secretary-General. Additional efforts could include:

(a) **Addressing the United Nations' "image problem"** by more effectively communicating in a transparent, inclusive and targeted manner to (re-)build trust by

showcasing measurable results on the ground in a way that inspires and excites audiences;

(b) **Filling the moral vacuum** with the United Nations' voice, continuing to advocate and safeguard United Nations values and standards as those shared by and universally applicable to all peoples of the world;

(c) **Reinventing the United Nations' role as a connecter and convener** in this fragmented world and promoting diversity of values and multiculturalism;

(d) **Reaching out to the youth**, who are historically positive and enthusiastic towards the ideals of the United Nations, to encourage them to make the United Nations their cause;

(e) **Forging partnerships beyond multilateralism's traditional State-centric universe** with the private sector and civil society and also directly with the public, especially the youth;

(f) **Engaging with and mobilizing a critical mass of leaders who champion multilateralism**;

(g) **Promoting ahead-of-the-curve action** by the United Nations system to respond collectively to emerging global issues and technological innovations;

(h) **Doing what the United Nations system does, but much better**, and reforming to be fit for purpose and more efficient.

18. In concluding the discussion, the Secretary-General emphasized that the basis for succeeding in all these necessary efforts was for the United Nations system to stay united and operate truly as one team.

IV. Segment 3 — Reform of the United Nations development system

19. On 21 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which it called for higher levels of cohesion, coordination, integration, accountability and transparency of the United Nations development system in its efforts to support Member States in the delivery of the universal and interlinked goals of the 2030 Agenda. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to present to Member States proposals for improving the collective support of the United Nations development system to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with particular focus on functions and capacities, funding modalities, accountability and coordination and the Resident Coordinator system. The first of two reports of the Secretary-General on this subject matter was due in June 2017, with a second report expected at the end of 2017.

20. The Secretary-General offered some framing remarks, focusing on country-level coordination. The review of the United Nations development system provided an opportunity to consider various aspects of the existing coordination mechanisms. In particular, he highlighted the possibility of enhancing coordination across the development-humanitarian nexus. The Secretary-General further stressed the importance of ensuring that field-level coordination systems were organized to fully empower all the United Nations system organizations represented in the country teams. Equally important to strengthening coordination was ensuring accountability for results, such as through improved evaluation of the performance of the United Nations entities at the country level.

21. Under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, CEB was invited to engage in a frank and forward-looking discussion on the question of reform of the United Nations development system. In particular, the Board was asked to address issues of leadership, coordination, programming tools, funding, collective accountability and country-level results, as an input to the preparation of the Secretary-General's reports.

22. In her introduction, the Deputy Secretary-General provided an update on the progress made in responding to the mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. She stressed that repositioning sustainable development was a critical aspect of the Secretary-General's overall vision to focus on root causes and the prevention of crises and vulnerabilities across all pillars. Effort was being made to foster alignment between the United Nations development system review and other reform processes in management and peace and security, with "prevention" as the common thread among them. The Deputy Secretary-General emphasized that tangible results achieved on the ground benefitting the people that the United Nations system served would be the true test of the reform efforts.

23. The consultation process had so far revolved around three main reform objectives: increasing leadership at all levels, including through a more robust Resident Coordinator system; strengthening accountability and trust around system-wide activities; and improving country-level delivery. The United Nations system would have to embrace change in order to live up to the ambition set by Member States through the 2030 Agenda and other commitments. The Deputy Secretary-General underscored that a common understanding of the direction of change was emerging towards a better coordinated, integrated and coherent country presence, with real accountability for system-wide results.

24. During the ensuing discussion, Board members broadly agreed that the demands of implementation of a universal and integrated sustainable development agenda provided the United Nations development system with a unique opportunity to rethink, renew and adapt the system to the realities of the twenty-first century. Reforms needed to be far-reaching in ambition but light on process. Executive Heads identified a number of broad principles to guide the process and pinpointed specific areas for improvement:

(a) **Values and norms**: United Nations values and norms were needed to reinforce the overall reform effort;

(b) **Focus on results**: The overarching objective of the reform process was to enhance the United Nations system's capacity and efficiency to deliver results at the country level;

(c) **Leadership**: To achieve results, the United Nations system needed competent and impartial leadership at the country level. The Resident Coordinator system was seen as a resource for the whole system, and "joint ownership" of the Resident Coordinator system by the United Nations development system needed to be ensured;

(d) **Accountability**: The accountability of the United Nations system to the host countries for delivering joint outcomes and results in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals needed to be strengthened. This required better performance management, more joined-up actions and pooled financing. Drawing on the expertise and capacity residing in the whole system would be increasingly important;

(e) **Coordination**: Streamlining and simplification of coordination structures were necessary to increase coherence and efficiency both at headquarters and the

country level. Coordination should not be an end in itself but an enabler of action and, in turn, impact;

(f) **Humanitarian-development nexus**: More synergies and complementarities needed to be created between humanitarian and development entities and activities and clarity needed given concern of remits;

(g) **Prevention**: Prevention was a cross-cutting theme and a responsibility for the entire United Nations system. Prevention and working in fragile contexts needed to be more systematically integrated into the work of the United Nations system;

(h) **Partnerships**: The United Nations system needed to enhance its capacity to engage with and leverage a wide variety of partners, including the private enterprise sector and civil society;

(i) **Science and technology**: There needed to be a deeper engagement by the United Nations system in science, technology, innovation and data;

(j) **Ambition**: The United Nations system needed to be ambitious and work with Member States to promote the necessary change and meet the ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

25. In summing up, the Deputy Secretary-General noted that the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and other agreements were all mutually reinforcing and inseparable building blocks of the universal 2030 Agenda. It was necessary to align United Nations system programming, budgeting and reporting in support of the implementation of this comprehensive framework for shared prosperity, peace and partnership on a healthy planet. Greater clarity was still needed as to each organization's role vis-a-vis the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It was imperative for the United Nations system to focus on the delivery of sustainable development results. A practical, "delivery-oriented" coordination mechanism was required to address any potential gaps and overlaps in service delivery at the country level. This required a thorough review of some of the key organizational components of field-level delivery, including the United Nations system's coordination structures. In conclusion, she thanked Board members for their active engagement and insightful contributions and welcomed additional contributions in the future.

V. Other matters

A. Endorsement of documents

26. In advance of the session, the Board had electronically endorsed the following documents:

(a) Report of the United Nations Development Group meeting of 22 February 2017;

(b) Summary of conclusions of the High-level Committee on Management at its thirty-third session (30-31 March 2017) (CEB/2017/3);

(c) Summary of conclusions of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-third session (16-17 March 2017) (CEB/2017/4);

(d) United Nations system strategic approach on climate change action (CEB/2017/4/Add.1);

(e) The United Nations system leadership framework (see annex).

B. Briefing on gender parity

27. The Secretary-General's Senior Adviser on Policy informed the Board that a first draft of the system-wide strategy on gender parity had been prepared by the Task Force on Gender Parity and Equality in the United Nations System. She recalled the past commitment to reaching gender parity at all levels by the year 2000, a goal that the United Nations Secretariat had been unable to achieve despite numerous policies, reports and recommendations over the years to advance it. Implementation had been hampered mainly by a lack of sustained political will and accountability, the absence of accompanying measures and enabling conditions for real reform, and resistance, at times, from key stakeholders. The gender parity picture across other United Nations system organizations was mixed.

28. The Secretary-General had decided to put his political weight behind this issue and pledged to reach gender parity at the senior leadership levels, including those of Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General, by 2021, and parity across the entire United Nations system well before 2030. The draft gender parity strategy put forward a road map with benchmarks and timeframes to achieve parity across the system. It highlighted good practices and areas where progress had been made, and included specific, bold and targeted recommendations to accelerate change. The focus was on establishing ambitious, realistic and customized targets and on encouraging leadership and accountability for achieving those targets.

29. In the ensuing discussion, Board members expressed strong support for the Secretary-General's initiative. Some technical organizations noted the difficulty of attracting female candidates to technical positions, while others stressed the importance of strict policy enforcement and strong top management support for achieving meaningful results. The need for a change in organizational culture was highlighted by many. In concluding the discussion, the Senior Adviser on Policy asked the Executive Heads to lend their political commitment to this system-wide effort.

C. Tribute to Board members leaving their United Nations positions

30. On behalf of the Board, the Secretary-General paid tribute to Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, who was attending her last CEB session, as well as Ms. Helen Clark, former Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, and Ms. Ertharin Cousin, former Executive Director of the World Food Programme, who had both left their positions prior to the CEB session. In addition, two members of the Secretary-General's delegation, Mr. Wu Hongbo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and Mr. Yukio Takasu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Management, received personal tributes by the Secretary-General.

D. Date and venue of the forthcoming session

31. **The Board formally approved the dates of the CEB second regular session of 2017, to be held at the Greentree Foundation in Manhasset, New York, on 8 and 9 November 2017.**

Annex

United Nations system leadership framework

I. Introduction: Our mission

1. The United Nations system has been charged with an awesome responsibility: to advance peace, human rights, development, environmental stewardship and economic and social progress. Essential to our success will be an understanding of what twenty-first century United Nations leadership looks like.

2. Yes, we have seen important progress. We have built up a system of international law to protect human rights, labour rights, refugees and the environment. We have negotiated an end to many violent conflicts. Absolute poverty has fallen sharply, greater numbers of people have access to healthcare and fewer children are dying before their fifth birthday. Most recently, we saw the adoption of ambitious new global frameworks for sustainable development, climate action and development finance.

3. And yet, peace, human rights and social and economic progress remain elusive for far too many. Weapons flow freely across borders, while people are blocked by walls and barbed wire. Wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few — creating spiralling inequality — while the forces of climate change, stubborn poverty and discrimination severely strain societies, feeding social unrest that often cascades into violent conflict, the scale of which we have not witnessed since the Second World War. In sum, United Nations leadership has never been more needed.

4. To press our case for peace, dignity and prosperity for all, we need a three-pronged approach: (1) a principled defence of our norms and standards; (2) a much greater focus on prevention; and (3) robust implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in a universal, all-out effort to tackle poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, instability, insecurity and injustice. We need to move from managing crises to preventing them in the first place. And the best means of prevention, and of sustaining peace, is inclusive, rights-based, sustainable development.

5. Now, more than ever then, we need the United Nations to truly lead on these issues, to be a defender of peace, justice and universal values; to be the place where effective collective measures for the prevention of conflict are taken; and to do its part to ensure that, indeed, no one is left behind. We need to break down our silos and fully embrace a new way of working to better connect our work across efforts at sustaining peace, human rights, sustainable development and humanitarian action. For this we need visionary and principled United Nations leadership — across the system.

6. It is in this context that this new United Nations system leadership framework is both a call to action — and a call for change — for all United Nations personnel. Of course, senior United Nations leaders have particular responsibilities under this framework. But United Nations leadership occurs in many contexts and at all levels. We are all called to lead. As such, the framework applies to all personnel of the United Nations system, regardless of their level, duties or location.

7. In today's challenging world, we need United Nations personnel who stand up for the values inherent in the Charter of the United Nations: peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance and solidarity; who are able to nimbly manoeuvre complex political spaces and leverage multi-stakeholder coalitions; who think creatively and

truly connect cross-pillar knowledge and experience; and who consistently seek more system-wide solutions that reach beyond individual entities and interests.

8. We need United Nations personnel who are transparent in how they manage, in how they use the resources entrusted to them and who commit to accountability to the people they serve. In a world where fundamental human rights are at risk, we need principled personnel, who embody the very international norms and standards that have come under threat and who are not afraid to defend them openly. At the same time, all United Nations personnel must be able to count on the full support and protection they need when acting with courage and principle. We need to live up to our own principles within the United Nations system. There must be zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse of any kind. And, as a global organization, we must do much better in bringing the diversity of the world into our own workforce, including with regard to the imperative of gender equality.

9. Yes, we live in challenging times. But these are precisely the challenges for which the United Nations was founded. We must lead in a manner true to the vision of our Charter. To that end, for United Nations system entities ready to take the next step towards this collective commitment, this framework will serve as a common foundation upon which we can develop current and future United Nations leadership.

II. Who we are: The eight defining characteristics of United Nations leadership

10. What does it mean to be a United Nations leader? What are the essential elements of United Nations leadership? What distinguishes it from other models and approaches? Where does one find the foundations of the United Nations leadership model? And how has that model changed as the United Nations system itself has evolved?

11. To answer these questions, we must look first to the Charter; the norms and standards of the United Nations as contained in its treaties and declarations; its core mandate to promote peace and security, protect human rights, address humanitarian needs and advance economic and social progress and development; the imperatives of the sustainable development agenda; and the United Nations policy framework[1] constructed to advance those imperatives and to deliver results.

12. Properly understood, this approach reveals eight defining characteristics of United Nations leadership:

- **It is norm-based** in that it is grounded in United Nations norms and standards, beginning with the Charter itself. In other words, United Nations leaders stand for something — something quite specific. The United Nations is a norm-based organization, bound to promote and protect human rights, peace and security, humanitarian principles, economic and social progress and development, gender equality, environmental stewardship and countless other areas in accordance with the norms and standards contained in the international treaties, resolutions and declarations adopted under the auspices of the United Nations. United Nations personnel are duty-bound to defend these in every case and must therefore be ready, able and equipped to do so.
- **It is principled**, defending its norms and standards and their application without discrimination, fear or favour even — especially — in the face of

[1] Including the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Human Rights Up Front initiative, the Resident Coordinator job description and United Nations country team guidance notes, and others.

pressure and push-back from powerful actors. It seeks out and promotes evidence over prejudice and popular assumptions for the basis of its work. Sometimes, this means telling government interlocutors, corporate actors, senior officials in our own organizations, and others — including the public — not just what they want to hear, but what they need to know. It means a principled approach to alleviating human suffering and protecting the lives, livelihoods and dignity of populations in need, without discrimination. United Nations personnel can never turn a blind eye to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, war crimes, crimes against humanity, corruption, discrimination, environmental degradation or other abuses, regardless of (inevitable) pressures to remain silent. This means our personnel must be equipped with the skills and tools to maintain principled, constructive engagement with all stakeholders on the most sensitive of issues. And it means that they must know that, at the highest levels of the United Nations, they will be supported in making, implementing and defending tough decisions. In sum, United Nations personnel must form part of an unbroken "blue line" of principle, across the organization and at all levels.

- **It is inclusive** of all personnel and stakeholders, irrespective of age, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, grade, contractual status and other personal characteristics. This means rejecting discrimination in all its forms, embracing diversity as a strength and practicing cultural and gender sensitivity. It requires actively reaching out to those less likely to engage in group settings, facilitating multi-stakeholder access and engagement and demonstrating empathy in interpersonal relationships. It means as well recognizing the authority of host communities and treating all human beings with respect, whether peers, supervisees, supervisors or external partners and stakeholders. And it means working to maximize geographic diversity and to achieve gender parity within the United Nations system, while maintaining the highest standards of competence and integrity.

- **It is accountable**, both mutually within the system and to beneficiaries and the public beyond. This means that, even as personnel ensure accountability from others, they equally accept their own accountability, striving for 360 degrees of mutual accountability. United Nations personnel embrace accountability as a gauge of progress, as a check against waste, fraud or abuse, and as an opportunity for transparency, communication and learning. They are skilled in results-based management, in constructive performance appraisal, in transparent leadership approaches and in approaches that support a culture of individual growth and development, where good performance is incentivized and underperformers are held to account. United Nations personnel are responsible for the safety and well-being of their staff, especially those who serve in volatile crisis contexts. And, most of all, they recognize that our ultimate accountability is to the people that we serve — especially the most vulnerable, excluded or marginalized — for the causes that we serve — peace, human rights, sustainable development, humanitarian relief and so on.

- **It is multidimensional**, integrated and engaged across pillars[2] and functions.[3] It is now seen as axiomatic that the three pillars of the Charter (peace and security, human rights and development) are interdependent, and that all United Nations functions, whether humanitarian, political, security or others, have an impact on one another. That is why today's United Nations leader is required to learn, access and shape new ways to connect cross-pillar

[2] Peace and security, human rights, and development.

[3] Development, human rights, humanitarian, political, environmental, safety and security, etc.

knowledge and experience and to ensure coherence while safeguarding a principled approach. S/he must be prepared to help unpack complex challenges and to build a shared understanding of problems, enabling collective support for effective solutions beyond the scope of individual organizations. The Resident Coordinator job description, for example, frames the Resident Coordinator as a multidimensional leader, responsible for leading on sustainable development, human rights, humanitarian,[4] political and security matters. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General head multidimensional peace missions of similar composition. And the Sustainable Development Goals themselves are a fully integrated framework, incorporating economic and social development, environment, human rights, peace and other elements into a single whole. Leadership, for the United Nations, does not reside in silos.

- **It is transformational**, of ourselves and of those we serve. The mission of the United Nations is to achieve positive change — to bring greater peace and security, human rights, economic and social progress and development and a healthier environment. The Sustainable Development Goals themselves constitute a major change project — and a significant change effort is therefore needed to better support their implementation while "leaving no one behind". The United Nations system needs to invest in strong transformational leadership at the individual, team and organizational levels. It needs to strengthen its own agility and adaptability to change. Transformational leadership requires a focus on redefining approaches to partnership building, strategy and systems thinking. It is heavily reinforced by attitudinal and behavioural adjustments, by development of leadership capabilities and by strong vision and leadership for change. United Nations personnel facilitate change through role model behaviour, recognizing and rewarding the contributions of others, fostering a work culture of reflection and through creating empowering conditions based on commitment and principled collaboration rather than compliance.

- **It is collaborative**, within and beyond the United Nations system. Today's United Nations personnel comprehend the interdependent imperatives of the Charter, as well as the comprehensive nature of the 2030 Agenda and the multiplicity of stakeholders beyond the Organization and its Member States. They seek collective "as one" cross-Charter thinking, joined-up approaches and solutions. And they use the United Nations' convening power to actively create safe and meaningful opportunities to hear the voices of the people themselves, civil society, local communities, the marginalized and excluded within them, and those most at risk of being left behind. A United Nations leader recognizes that better connecting universal goals to people-centred initiatives requires investment in collective United Nations efforts to achieve them. This requires new behaviours that strengthen collaboration within and beyond traditional organizational boundaries. United Nations personnel should be able to scope constituencies, opportunities and tipping points for progress that harness the latest technological advances of the scientific and technical community, collaborative systems thinking and enterprising partnerships with both traditional and non-traditional partners. This requires creating collaborative spaces for innovative thinking and experimentation at the country and global levels and the exploration of tailored problem-driven solutions across constituencies and in dynamic environments and varying country contexts.

[4] If humanitarian assistance is required, and where a separate Humanitarian Coordinator position has not been established.

- **It is self-applied**, that is, modelled in our own behaviour. A United Nations leader is expected not just to preach United Nations principles and norms to others, but to live them. She/he seeks to inspire, not to command. This means that, in interactions within offices, teams, agencies and across the system, the United Nations leader is fully respectful of all colleagues at all levels, is gender-sensitive, promotes and celebrates diversity as a strength, fosters teamwork, empowers staff, recognizes and rewards merit and operates with integrity, transparency and fairness. And it also means that every United Nations leader exhibits these principles in all interactions with the people, communities and constituencies they serve, with partners in Government and civil society, and, not least, with the vulnerable, marginalized and those most likely to be left behind.

III. What we do: United Nations leadership in action

13. Four ways of working exemplify these leadership characteristics. They will of course manifest themselves differently, depending on the level and role of the personnel in the organization. They are:

- **Focusing on impact**. We must unambiguously focus on achieving impact for the people we serve. This requires focusing on where the United Nations can add the greatest value and provide the best return on investment, rather than on mandate alone. And it necessitates a more rigorous results orientation. The keystone to achieving impact is accountability: we must embrace accountability for ourselves and for others.

- **Driving transformational change**. The 2030 Agenda challenges the United Nations system profoundly to change the way it does business. Because environments are fluid, volatile and rapidly changing, we need to constantly adapt ways of working to achieve maximum impact. This requires being willing to learn and to help the organization learn and constant innovation. To achieve results at scale, United Nations leaders need to drive transformational change both within and outside their organizations to influence the behaviour of the systems with which they interact.

- **Systems thinking**. The interconnectedness and indivisibility of the 2030 Agenda and the realities of the world in which we work require us to deal with complexity at an unprecedented scale. As such, we need to identify, understand and develop appropriate ways of applying systems thinking to collectively define and address the challenges that we confront. We need to think across and beyond one area of expertise or mandate and to understand how our actions contribute to the overall United Nations objectives. We need to analyse the environment as a set of complex, live ecosystems and to understand underlying organizing principles as well as the linkages, interactions, dependencies and power distribution among components and constituencies. And we must strategically identify leverage points in these systems to achieve maximum impact. United Nations leaders must therefore shift from linear thinking to non-linear, systems thinking.

- **Co-creation**. This approach requires us all to work with colleagues across the three pillars of the Charter and through multi-stakeholder partnerships. We need to catalyse action by building context- and issue-specific networks, coalitions and partnerships, leveraging the diverse contributions of all relevant stakeholders within and outside the United Nations. Providing safe, collaborative space and positioning ourselves as conveners and connectors rather than mere project implementers, we need to facilitate inclusive group

processes to jointly analyse problems and co-create solutions to achieve results. Ultimately, we must shift from collaboration to co-creation.

IV. How we will do it: Operationalizing the framework

14. The United Nations leadership framework exemplifies a common approach to leadership for all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that promote and uphold the universal leadership characteristics, behaviours, principles and mindsets envisioned in this document. The framework should serve as an organizational tool, going beyond human resources interventions. And the leadership characteristics defined here can be embedded in all areas of work of the United Nations system.

15. To these ends, each implementing agency has broad flexibility in defining the best implementation road map at the entity level, with due regard to their own mandates, unique value offerings and specific needs. This will provide an opportunity for agencies to be creative and develop tailored proposals.

A. Knowledge and skills

16. Knowledgeable leadership is empowered leadership. United Nations personnel must be well versed in this leadership approach, in the substance of the Charter's three pillars, of mandates across the system, the demands of the broader "ecosystem" of actors and the needs and aspirations of the people and communities we serve.

17. Further, twenty-first century United Nations leadership must have a firm basis in evidence, which is also central to the Sustainable Development Goals, essential to addressing root causes of problems and key to combating prejudice, unpacking false assumptions and moving beyond the failed approaches of the past. A commitment to continuous learning and professional/leadership development is therefore a key attribute of the United Nations leader.

18. As part of the learning process, United Nations leaders should be aware of risk-management techniques and ensure that lessons are well-captured to promote a positive development experience inside organizational structures. Measured risk-taking should be included as part of efforts to build leadership capabilities in order to promote creativity and innovation.

B. A culture of change

19. Operationalizing the United Nations system leadership framework will require the alignment of the organizational culture of the United Nations system and of its constituent entities to it.

20. We need to build models and prototypes of both vertical and horizontal leadership approaches where innovation, entrepreneurship and thinking outside the box become the norm rather than the exception. There is a need to build a reiterative model where we adopt, try and test, validate and then go on to the next level. This is applicable at all levels, but first and foremost at the top levels of United Nations leadership. Of course, changing an organization's culture — let alone that of an entire system — is a long-term process that requires dedicated leadership and a purposeful, sustained effort over time. And it will also require changing the very way we drive change in the United Nations.

21. Individual behaviours are among the building blocks of organizational culture. We must therefore aim to change key behaviours in the United Nations system, just

as we must work to change associated mindsets and attitudes. Old ways of doing business or holding status-quo expectations cannot serve the ever-changing United Nations context. United Nations leaders are expected to showcase adaptability and continuous learning to make the organization relevant for the changing and growing demands of the world. In shepherding behavioural change, we should rely principally on pull rather than push factors and make adherence to the desired behaviours attractive, instead of merely imposing them through formal compliance instruments. We should capitalize more on horizontal and bottom-up dynamics, instead of relying too heavily on the usual — and seldom effective — vertical and top-down drivers.

22. More fundamentally, we should recognize that we will not succeed in changing the behaviour of all personnel in all United Nations entities at once. But we can focus on empowering existing change agents — those who already display the desired leadership characteristics.

23. United Nations entities will therefore have to consider how they will demonstrate their commitment to this framework and their level of involvement in it. But agencies that are ready to commit to and be associated with the framework will see their progress and successes recognized.

24. Lastly, transparency — vis-à-vis both United Nations staff and external stakeholders — should be harnessed as a powerful lever of culture change.

C. Managing change

25. To advance this vision, it is recommended that the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), under the leadership of the Secretary-General as its Chair, promote system-wide initiatives to align the organizational culture of the United Nations system and its entities to this framework. Such initiatives should focus on three key drivers:

- **Ownership by United Nations senior leaders**: senior leaders provide the authority and credibility necessary for successful culture change and must be accountable for it;
- **Active engagement and involvement by staff**: at all levels, staff ownership and buy-in is crucial for any culture change process to succeed;
- **Organizational alignment**: the relevant structures, systems, policies and processes of individual United Nations entities that commit to participating in this framework and those of the United Nations system will need to be aligned to the framework to enable and incentivize desired changes and behaviours.

D. Steering change

26. In order to build on the road map, a number of high-impact, system-wide interventions will be conducted with "champion" United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes that are ready to initiate and understand the details of the framework's implementation. United Nations agencies choosing to opt-in to this initiative would develop internal implementation road maps based on their individual business models and their individual circumstances. This will provide a flexible mechanism to implement the system-wide core values of the leadership model while respecting the diversity of United Nations system organizations and their specific needs at the early stages of the implementation of the framework.

27. A **steering group** consisting of the three pillars of CEB will be established to shepherd the implementation aspects of the framework and will involve United Nations entities that demonstrate commitment to aligning their organizational cultures to the framework.

- Continuous senior-level ownership and sponsorship is key to the success of the framework. The three pillars of CEB will regularly conduct a **review of progress** made under this joint framework. Bottlenecks to progress identified through such reviews would, as appropriate, be brought to CEB for strategic guidance.
- The steering group should develop:
  - (a) A **road map** listing a limited number of high-impact, system-wide interventions to jump-start the alignment of the United Nations culture to this framework, with clear deliverables and timelines. These could include:
    - Launching a **platform to crowd-source ideas**, engage staff and enable them to self-organize around changing the United Nations culture;
    - Promoting the concept of **staff mobility**, both vertical and horizontal, inside the organization and across United Nations agencies;
    - Mandating **transparency** as the default in a wide array of systems and processes;
    - An **advocacy** and information package to familiarize staff at all levels in all agencies and entities with the framework;
    - A **mapping** of existing United Nations leadership development efforts, with a mind to advancing coherence between them, obviating duplication and filling gaps;
    - Training and **learning** events on United Nations leadership that incorporate the core elements of this framework;
    - Reviewing and updating of relevant **assessment, performance review and guidance** materials and tools to ensure alignment with the model;
    - Establishment of a dedicated inter-agency **leadership development** mechanism and working closely with relevant United Nations and external partners to inform, incentivize and inspire system-wide leadership development as well as engagement around specific strategic issues and challenges faced by United Nations leaders and to help to translate the elements of the United Nations leadership model into everyday practice;
    - Launching an **inter-agency initiative** to develop United Nations leaders aligned with the framework.
  - (b) **Criteria** and tools to measure progress in changing the United Nations culture at the United Nations entity and system-wide levels.
    - Each participating United Nations entity that has committed to this initiative should develop an **internal road map** outlining the steps it will take to align its organizational culture to the framework in the three focus areas identified above, i.e.: (i) senior leadership ownership; (ii) staff engagement and involvement; and (iii) organizational alignment.

V. Conclusion: The imperatives of leadership

28. This framework is situated within the broader context of the reform initiatives launched by the Secretary-General since the onset of his tenure. These include the reform of the United Nations development system and of the Secretariat's peace and security architecture; furthering Secretariat management reform; making the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre an integrated information hub; and establishing the Executive Committee to assist the Secretary-General in taking decisions on issues that span across the three pillars of the United Nations' work. Conceptualizing all these change efforts, as well as the proposed leadership framework, as part of a single whole, will enable the identification and leveraging of synergies and the application of change management tools to maximize success.

29. A critical success factor for this framework will be the extent to which United Nations senior leaders model the desired behaviours and hold others accountable for doing so. Weak accountability, rooted in a weak management culture, hampers reform efforts in any organization. Strengthening the United Nations' management culture at all levels is therefore a key prerequisite for this or any other meaningful change effort to succeed.

30. Now, as the United Nations system begins its dedicated efforts to help realize the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, as it confronts chronic poverty, expanding armed conflict, climate change and environmental degradation, unprecedented humanitarian crises, massive inequalities and gross violations of human rights, more intensified efforts will be required to reinforce and extend this model of leadership across the United Nations at the global, regional and country levels.

31. The challenges that confront us in the twenty-first century will not be met by mere deference to power, reliance on a shaky status quo or operation in old silos. Rather, they demand a model of leadership that is norm-based, principled, inclusive, accountable, multidimensional, transformational, collaborative and self-applied.

32. That is, a United Nations leadership model.